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July 12, 1999

For Immediate Release:

PROPOSED BUDGET REQUESTS GET EIU BOARD OF TRUSTEES' OK

CHARLESTON -- The university's proposed Fiscal Year 2001 appropriated operating funds and capital budget requests which include \$43 million for the rehabilitation and expansion of the Doudna Fine Arts Center have received Board of Trustees approval.

Eastern received \$2 million in FY 2000 funding for the planning of Doudna's renovation; planning activities are scheduled to begin this fall. The structure, completed in 1959, houses the university's art, music and theatre departments, as well as the offices for the College of Arts and Humanities.

The Doudna building represents only a small portion of the many deferred maintenance projects on Eastern's campus that await attention. Recent capital budget requests by the university have prioritized the rehabilitation and remodeling of existing

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facilities over new construction. Other new requests approved by the BOT include \$4.5 million for moveable equipment for Booth Library, \$2.5 million for the construction of a south campus chilled water loop, \$4 million to upgrade the campus' electrical distribution and \$1.85 million for capital renewal projects in Eastern's Physical Sciences Building, McAfee Gym and Klehm Hall.

In addition, a \$2.5 million request will be made for the planning phase of a new science building which, along with the Doudna project, was outlined by the BOT in April as part of a campus master plan providing direction to the future development of the university's physical infrastructure, including buildings, grounds, streets and parking lots.

An appropriated funds operating budget request of more than \$86 million -- an 18.7 percent increase over last year -- includes \$6 million in parity funding to bring Eastern's state funding level closer to other Illinois public universities. Eastern's level of funding (appropriated and income funds) per full-time equivalent (FTE) student is lowest in the state for comparable public universities at \$6,433.

Funding per FTE student for other comprehensive public institutions in Illinois ranges from \$7,456 at Western Illinois University to \$11,271 at UI-Springfield. It would require an additional \$10.9 million to bring Eastern up to the per-student funding level of the next lowest-funded university and \$51.6 million to bring Eastern to the funding level of the highest-funded comparable university.

The operating budget request also includes a 3 percent average increase each

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for salary increases and Social Security payments (Medicare portion), a 5 percent increase for utilities and a 10 percent increase for library acquisitions.

Also included in the operating budget request is \$155,500 to establish a minor in nutrition and fitness and \$3.5 million to support academic programs, technology improvements, a new professional development program for teachers, improved assessment methods, and faculty and staff recruitment efforts.

Eastern, as part of the state's budgeting process, must submit its appropriations request annually to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The IBHE, in turn, will make its FY 2001 higher education budget recommendations to the governor in December 1999, and the governor will then make his FY 2001 budget recommendations to the General Assembly in February 2000.